



Strategic Plan

2022 -2027



GUYANA
MARINE CONSERVATION
SOCIETY

MARINE CONSERVATION

Acknowledgements The GMCS wishes to thank all those who were involved in the development of various stages of this strategy and provided their valuable input, in particular the GMCS board.

Citation: Guyana Marine Conservation Strategy Strategic Plan 2022-2027.

This strategy was developed

by

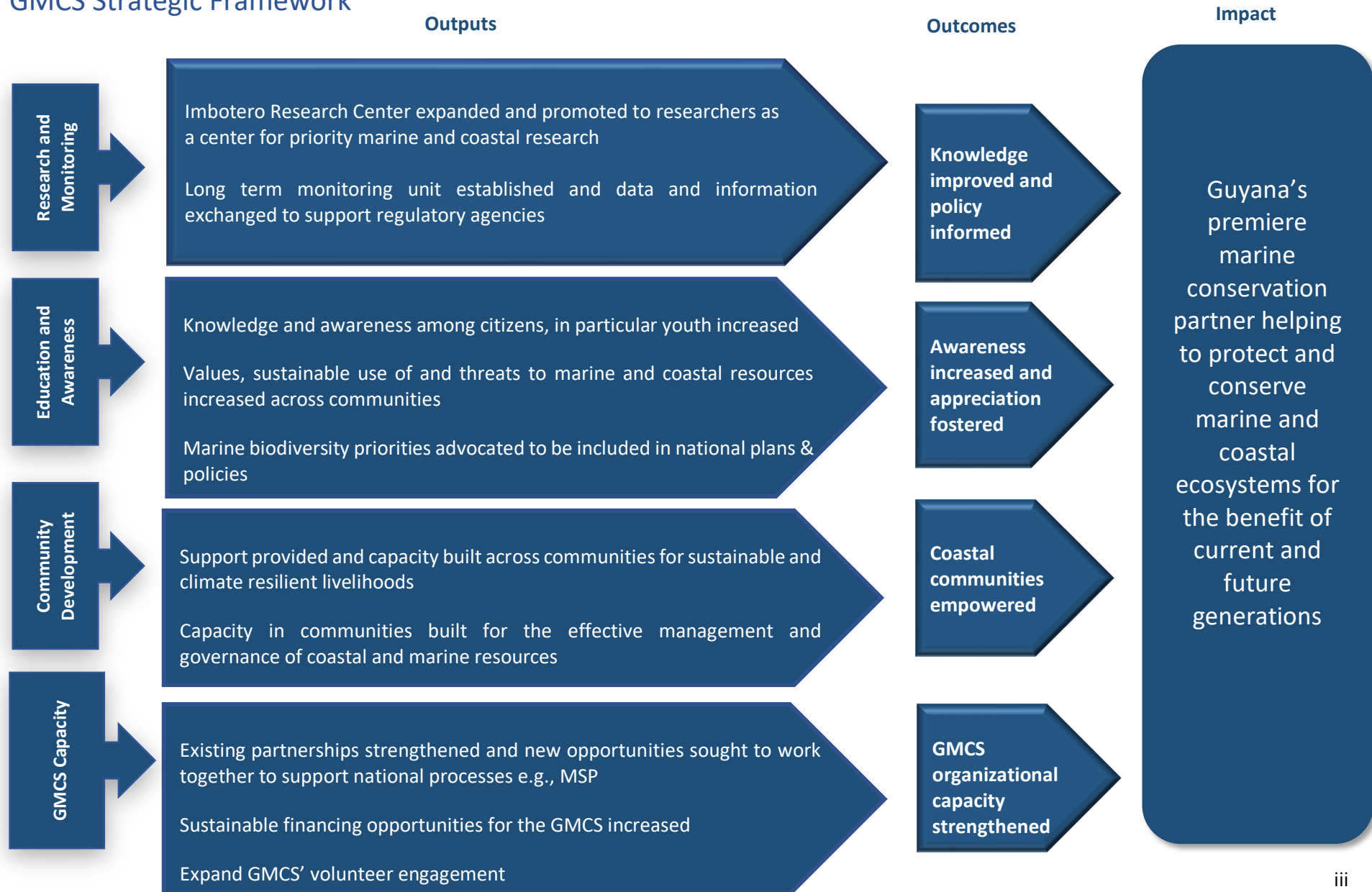
Sara Henry and Anouska Kinahan



Practical-Tailored-Integrated-Sustainable
Conservation Solutions

www.akconservationconsulting.com

GMCS Strategic Framework



Executive Summary

We are the oldest and only marine-focused NGO in Guyana with a long history of pioneering marine and coastal conservation in Guyana. Our NGO is a community of marine experts, volunteers, and local and indigenous communities. Through this strategic plan, we aim to strengthen our existing work and implement new initiatives to support the effective conservation and management of our ocean biodiversity and promote the growth of a sustainable blue economy. As threats such as climate change, oil and gas development, pollution and overfishing to our marine environment proliferate, we foresee a greater and more important need for our NGO.

With the vision to become Guyana's premiere marine conservation partner, over the next five years, our work will focus on four strategic themes:

- i) **Research and monitoring:** We aim to improve knowledge of Guyana's marine and coastal ecosystems to inform policy and decision making for their effective conservation and management
- ii) **Education and awareness:** We aim to increase awareness and foster a greater appreciation of the values of, and threats to Guyana's coastal and marine biodiversity, to encourage positive behavioral changes among citizens and to provide coastal communities with a better understanding for more effective and sustainable natural resource management and use
- iii) **Community development:** We aim to empower coastal communities for increased resilience to climate change and other hazards and to benefit from the sustainable use and governance of coastal and marine resources
- iv) **Strengthening GMCS organizational capacity:** We aim to strengthen partnerships and internal institutional structures for effective implementation of GMCS' activities so that the NGO is recognized as Guyana's premiere marine conservation partner

Our plan will be governed by a multi-stakeholder Board of Directors, supported by project oversight and executing committees, and an operations sub-committee. The implementation of this strategy will be led by a core group of volunteers in addition to working alongside and partnering with stakeholders, in particular coastal indigenous communities. Funding will be sought through 3rd party funds as well as exploring other more sustainable financing options. This plan intends to be adaptive and will be monitored against key performance indicators at the strategy's mid-term and adapted as necessary.

Table of Contents

GMCS Strategic Framework	iii
Executive Summary	iv
1. WHO ARE WE?.....	1
1.2 Our Values	2
2. GUYANA’S MARINE AND COASTAL CONTEXT	3
2.1 Biodiversity and Conservation.....	3
2.3 Economic and Social Value	4
2.4 Threats to the Marine Environment	5
2.4.1 Climate Change	5
2.4.2 Oil and Gas Development.....	5
2.4.3 Pollution	6
2.4.4 Unsustainable fishing	6
3. LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT	7
3.1 Legislation.....	7
3.2 National Policies	8
3.3 International commitments.....	8
4. WHAT WE INTEND TO DO	9
4.1 Our Vision	10
4.2 Our Strategic Themes	11
Strategic Theme 1: Research and Monitoring.....	11
Strategic Theme 2: Education and Awareness	12
Strategic Theme 3: Community Development	13
Strategic Theme 4: Strengthen GMCS organizational capacity	15
5. HOW WILL WE DO IT?	16
5.1 Governance and Activity Implementation	16
5.2 Financing	17
5.3 Monitoring and evaluation.....	17

1. WHO ARE WE?



Guyana's oldest and only marine-focused conservation NGO, we are a pool of committed experts from academia, government, private sector, and indigenous backgrounds. We work together passionately to support and advocate for the protection, conservation and management of Guyana's marine and coastal biodiversity.

Formerly, the Guyana Marine Turtle Conservation Society (GMTCS), our journey started in the 1980s where we worked with Indigenous communities to conserve the nesting habitats of four endangered sea turtles along the shores of what is now the Shell Beach Protected Area. In 2000, the Society was formally established as a non-governmental organization under the Friendly' Society's Act. Aware of Guyana's growing marine and coastal conservation needs, in 2014, we expanded our mandate from its primary focus on sea turtle conservation, to other important marine species, their habitats and wider marine and coastal ecosystems.

A few of our outstanding contributions to marine and coastal conservation in Guyana and their impacts have been:



Formal implementation of the sea turtle conservation program in the Shell Beach area between 2000 – 2011.



Leading the Shell Beach Protected Area process which resulted in it being declared a protected area in 2011.



Mobilization of donor funds to support various sustainable community livelihood activities such as the North West Organics, within and adjacent to the Shell Beach Protected Area.



Education and awareness to local communities and the wider public on the value of marine and coastal resources, and advocacy to decision makers for the need of their preservation.



Securing an annual no fishing zone from the Ministry of Agriculture which reduced incidental mortality of sea turtles and increased their populations.



Construction of the Leatherback Sea turtle monument in central Georgetown.

1.2 Our Values

Throughout the years, our interaction and relationships with colleagues, partners, and other stakeholders has been, and will continue to be guided by these values:

1. Participation and Collaboration

We recognize and will act on our belief that the conservation of marine diversity is best advanced by the contributions of people from diverse backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, and cultures.

2. Fairness and transparency

We will treat every person equally, with respect, and at all times practice accountability and honesty.

3. Innovation

We will always compliment the traditional knowledge of our indigenous peoples with the best available science and technology and to inform and guide decisions.

4. Adaptive

We will routinely assess our performance, learn from it, and adapt our strategies as necessary.



2. GUYANA'S MARINE AND COASTAL CONTEXT

Guyana's marine and coastal environment is of immense biological and socio-economic importance. As our blue economy develops, so too will the increasing impacts on our ocean's resources, in particular from the oil and gas sector. This will reduce our marine and coastal ecosystems' ability to maintain their productivity and to continue to provide important ecosystem services to sustain biodiversity and our livelihoods.

2.1 Biodiversity and Conservation

Although less studied than their terrestrial counterpart, our marine and coastal ecosystems are thought to be highly productive. The inter-tidal mudflats and narrow sandy and shell beaches, and in some areas, mangrove forests, contribute to stabilizing our particularly vulnerable coastline. The shell beaches provide a nesting habitat for four species of IUCN endangered sea turtles: the leather back sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), and olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*). The shoreline is also an important birding site for Scarlet ibises (*Eudocimus ruber*), Caribbean flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*), herons, and egrets that forage along the coast. It is estimated that the Shell Beach Protected Area alone, supports over 200 species of native and migratory birds.

Important mammalian species that occupy our marine waters include the Guiana Dolphin (*Sotalia guianensis*), West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), the Sei Whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*), the Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*), and Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*).

Currently, conservation interventions related to the marine environment have been mostly limited to sea turtle conservation, the establishment of the coastal Shell Beach Protected Area (SBPA) in 2011, and mangrove restoration along some coastal shorelines from 2010 to present.

2.2 Marine and Coastal Protected Areas

Guyana is a signatory to the UNCBD and the establishment, expansion, and management effectiveness of protected areas is an important aspect of this international agreement. To date, Guyana has focused more on our terrestrial PAs and no marine or mixed marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) exist. In keeping with global trends to recognize the value of MCPAs as nature-based solutions to combat the climate crisis and in supporting blue economies, Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 identified the establishment of marine and coastal protected areas as a key action.

2.3 Economic and Social Value

Guyana's marine environment functions as a hub for the country's economic activity and development. Prior to 2020, fisheries constituted an important economic activity in marine waters where, overall (inland and marine fishery) is estimated to have contributed 1.8% to the GDP in 2017¹ and directly employed over 7,000 people², with many more working in the fishery support services. In addition to fisheries and shipping, which have been the main economic drivers until now, oil has now become a major part of our economy. Since the first oil discovery in 2015, there have been over twenty additional discoveries making this oil find one of the most prolific in recent years. Oil production commenced in December 2019 earning revenues that elevated us to one of the fastest growing economies globally. In line with these discoveries, there is a corresponding increase in the development of shore bases in the Demerara and Berbice Rivers to service the energy sector.

For local and indigenous communities that live along the coastline, the marine and coastal environments are a significant source of livelihoods and a place of culture, history, and heritage. Our ocean is embedded in the livelihoods and identity of over six hundred thousand Guyanese who live along our coast, from

¹ Guyana Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (GEITI) (2021) *Fisheries*, GYEITI. Available at: <https://www.gyeiti.org/fisheries> (Accessed: 26 March 2022).

² FAO Fisheries & Aquaculture - Fishery and Aquaculture Country Profiles - The Republic of Guyana' (2019).

artisanal fishery, catching crabs, beekeeping, to harvesting of non-timber forest products in the mangrove forests, and the sacredness of Shell Mounds in Region 1 to the Warau Indigenous peoples.

2.4 Threats to the Marine Environment

Guyana's marine environment and the healthy future of our ocean's resources are faced with increasing threats mainly related to climate change, impacts of the oil and gas sector, pollution and unsustainable fishing practices³. As the threats to our marine and coastal ecosystems increase, there is a need for a greater focus to be placed on wider marine and coastal conservation interventions. In particular, actions that strengthen our resilience to climate change, and to maintain a healthy ocean to support the livelihoods and culture on which so many of our citizens depend, are becoming increasingly urgent.

2.4.1 Climate Change

Climate change effects, particularly sea level rise, increased temperature and reduced dissolved oxygen, is predicted to impact marine biodiversity by disrupting their abundance, diversity and distribution, and create conditions for invasive species to thrive. The negative impacts of climate change are already apparent in the Shell Beach Protected Area where sea turtle nesting beaches are being significantly eroded. It is predicted that by 2050, we will have the second most receding coastline in the Caribbean⁴, displacing not only biodiversity but also the largest section of our population.

2.4.2 Oil and Gas Development

Since 2015, Guyana's oil discovery totals over 10 billion barrels with the country projected to earn over USD\$5billion by 2025. Plans to auction off more hydrocarbon blocks for exploration represents an opportunity for greater economic growth but at the same time significantly increases the risk of pollution from waste water, ballast water, oil spills and continued natural gas flaring. The severity of an unmitigated oil spill will significantly affect Guyana's marine and coastal livelihoods which requires oil spill sensitization and drills, and compensatory mechanisms for those communities whose livelihoods will be most

³ Burke, M. (2017) 'The impact of climate change on the fisheries sector - Guyana Chronicle', *Guyana Chronicle*. October 29. Available at: <https://guyanachronicle.com/2017/10/29/the-impact-of-climate-change-on-the-fisheries-sector/> (Accessed: 16 April 2022).

⁴ Rozenberg, J. et al. (2021) *360° Resilience: A Guide to Prepare the Caribbean for a New Generation of Shocks*. World Bank. doi:[10.1596/36405](https://doi.org/10.1596/36405).

impacted. Generally, there is need for studies to understand the impact of oil and gas operations on the marine and coastal environment and other economic sectors such as fisheries.

2.4.3 Pollution

Globally, plastic pollution continues to pose a significant risk to marine life⁵. Guyana's pollution problem largely stems from the unregulated use and disposal of single use plastics. Waste disposal in canals through drainage networks and rivers make their way into the ocean and contribute to a build up along the shoreline, potentially harming marine life and disrupting ecosystems. Further, as agricultural and industrial activity increase along the coast, so too does the potential for chemical and noise pollution. In response to these pollution issues, there have been several coastal clean-up campaigns over the past years, efforts to enforce littering regulations by the EPA, and consultations on a ban of single use plastics.

2.4.4 Unsustainable fishing

With the exception of a spike in 2012 and 2016, fish catch has generally followed a decreasing trend⁶ over the decades which is largely attributed to climate change and unsustainable fishing practices⁷. As fish continues to be the main source of protein in Guyanese diets, and with an increasing global demand, the Ministry of Agriculture estimates that the number of unregulated fishing vessels has proliferated, with modification of old and introduction of new methods to increase fish catch. As of 2021, fisher's growing concerns about fish catch decline made national news and they called for remedial interventions.

⁵ Wabnitz, C. and Nichols, W. (2010) 'Editorial: Plastic Pollution: An Ocean Emergency', *Marine Turtle News Letter*, 20.

⁶ In 2013, a decline in fish catch by 6.5% was attributed to overfishing (source: Parliament of Guyana (2014) *Budget Speech delivered by Honourable Dr. Ashni Kumar Singh, M.P. Minister of Finance*. Available at: https://finance.gov.gy/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/budget_speech_2014.pdf (Accessed: 6 May 2022))

⁷ Burke, M. (2017) 'The impact of climate change on the fisheries sector - Guyana Chronicle', *Guyana Chronicle*. October 29. Available at: <https://guyanachronicle.com/2017/10/29/the-impact-of-climate-change-on-the-fisheries-sector/> (Accessed: 16 April 2022)



3. LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Marine and coastal conservation and management in Guyana are governed by various legislations and institutions. We will work under the framework of all relevant national and international legislation and ensure our activities are aligned with the country's key national policies, in particular the Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030.

3.1 Legislation

A brief overview of those directly relevant to marine and coastal conservation are provided below.

Protected Areas Act 2011: provides for the establishment of protected areas, management for which is mandated to the Protected Areas Commission. Future establishment of protected and conservation areas will therefore be largely regulated under this Act.

Guyana Wildlife Conservation and Management Act 2016: provides for the protection, management and conservation of Guyana's wildlife, and regulation of its trade. The Guyana Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission was established to fulfill this mandate, as such they are responsible for managing endangered coastal species.

Maritime Zones Act 2010: provides for the protection and preservation of Guyana's marine environment through scientific research and the establishment of marine protected areas and reserves. It is enforced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

Fisheries Act 2002: this Act was created for the management of fisheries in Guyana's waters. Fisheries is managed by the Department of Fisheries under the Ministry of Agriculture.

Environmental Protection Act 1996: enforced by the Environmental Protection Agency, this Act provides for the management and sustainable use of natural resources in the terrestrial, marine and coastal realms (including the seabed).

3.2 National Policies

Marine conservation is also driven by the following policy enablers:

Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030: Guyana's national strategy that aims to guide the country along a low carbon development path, and provides key milestones for marine and coastal conservation.

National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan 2012 – 2020: Outlines commitments to conserve biodiversity and expresses interest and intentions to safeguard marine and coastal ecosystems.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Plan 2000 (Draft): Targets the sustainable development of coastal resources.

3.3 International commitments

Guyana signed on to a number of international agreements and conventions that influences marine and coastal biodiversity protection, conservation and management. Guyana is signatory to:

- Global Oceans Alliance 2021 - joined in 2021
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 - adopted in 2015
- SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (2014) - affirmed in 2014
- Specially Protected Areas & Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol (1990) - ratified in 2010
- Cartagena Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (1983) - ratified in 2010
- International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution (MARPOL 73/78) - acceded to in 1997
- United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) (1992) - ratified in 1994
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna & Flora (CITES) (1973) - ratified in 1977



4. WHAT WE INTEND TO DO

As a community of marine experts and volunteers working together, our mission is to support the effective conservation and management of our ocean biodiversity and to promote the growth of a sustainable blue economy. We will do this through partnerships, supporting coastal communities, research, awareness and advocacy.

To help achieve our mission, we have committed to strengthen and expand our actions through this 5-year Strategic Plan which has identified four strategic themes. An overview of our four themes and our key objectives and actions are provided in this chapter.

As the only national NGO with a focus on marine conservation in Guyana, we have made every effort to ensure our strategic plan is fully aligned with national policies, in particular with the LCDS' 2030 ocean economy priorities. Table 1 below highlights specifically where our strategy is aligned with the LCDS 2030.

Table 1: Alignment of GMCS' Strategic plan with the LCDS 2030

LCDS Ocean Economy Priorities	GMCS 5-year Strategy
Marine plans and policies	<p>GMCS will make its research and monitoring data on coastal dynamics and biodiversity available to relevant stakeholders and regulatory agencies. This will be done to support the development of data guided policies relating to Guyana's coastal and marine ecosystems.</p> <p>GMCS will engage stakeholders to increase their understanding of policies that promote a healthy marine and coastal ecosystem.</p> <p>GMCS will establish partnerships and support marine planning process and the implementation of marine and coastal policies and plans.</p>
Protect Marine Life and Coastal Ecosystems	<p>GMCS will conduct and support research to increasingly understand the status of marine and coastal resources such as mangroves and mangrove related biodiversity and their threats. This would include (but not limited to), rapid population assessments, coastal and human disturbance impacts, along with any other studies that prove appropriate for the habitat in question. In this way, GMCS can help to identify appropriate management strategies and under this strategic theme, GMCS aims to work with regulatory agencies (EPA, PAC and DoF), to establish long-term Monitoring Unit to monitor ocean health.</p> <p>GMCS will engage with and increase awareness to coastal communities on the value and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources.</p>
Supporting sustainable use of marine and coastal resources	<p>GMCS will build capacity in coastal communities for the sustainable use and management of marine and coastal resources.</p>

4.1 Our Vision

We are Guyana's premiere marine conservation partner helping to protect and conserve marine and coastal ecosystems for the benefit of biodiversity and present and future generations

4.2 Our Strategic Themes

Strategic Theme 1: Research and Monitoring

Strategic Goal: Improve knowledge of Guyana's marine and coastal ecosystems to inform policy and decision making for their effective conservation and management

The Imbotero Research Center, located at Imbotero, Region 1, was established in 2020 by GMCS. This center is currently operating and supports visiting researchers. It is fully equipped with furnishings and solar power and can accommodate six to eight comfortably. Transportation, housekeeping, tour guiding, meals and canoe rentals are provided by the community. We aim to expand, maintain, equip, and promote the use of this research facility as a center for marine and coastal research, attracting both national and international research teams and individuals who will focus on conducting research on priority topics: marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems, including peatlands, wetlands, and mangroves; climate change and its impacts; blue carbon, and the blue economy; and Warrau Culture among others. Involving and employing indigenous community members trained in field research techniques and rich in traditional knowledge systems, will be a core philosophy of our approach to promoting the center and supporting visiting research teams.

Data will be made available to stakeholders such as the PAC, EPA, MARAD, Dept. of Fisheries, and other decision-making bodies to support the development of science-based marine and coastal conservation and management policies.

OBJECTIVES	KEY ACTIVITIES	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S)
1.1 Expand and promote the Imbotero Research Center as a center for priority marine and coastal research for national and international researchers	1.1.1 Expand the Imbotero research center in Region 1 and promote the inclusion of trained indigenous community members into visiting research teams	By 2024, research center expanded to facilitate an annual increase in the number of researchers using the facility
	1.1.2 Identify priority research areas and promote same to national, regional and international universities	By 2024 at least 50% of priority research topics, (that include climate change monitoring research) are 100% carried out by 2027
	1.1.3 Conduct research and provide support to visiting	

	researchers carrying out priority research	At least one technical report or scientific publication per year produced and disseminated to key stakeholders
	1.1.4 Publish, promote and disseminate research data and findings to relevant stakeholder groups such as decision makers, government agencies and coastal communities	
1.2 Provide support to regulatory agencies as an independent watchdog for data validation and assessing the impacts of blue economy activities on marine and coastal biodiversity, through the establishment of a long-term monitoring programme and exchange of data and information	1.2.1 Liaise with relevant agencies to identify needs and potential areas of support and develop agreements as necessary	By 2024, at least 3 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with government or non-government agencies
	1.2.2 Establish a monitoring framework and monitoring unit that will work collaboratively with regulatory agencies (EPA, Coast Guard, PAC, MARAD) to systematically track and measure ocean health	By 2024, a monitoring unit is established and provides regular data to relevant government agencies
	1.2.3 Establish monitoring databases and feedback systems to regulatory agencies and other relevant stakeholders	

Strategic Theme 2: Education and Awareness

Strategic Goal: Increase awareness and foster a greater appreciation of the values of, and threats to Guyana's coastal and marine biodiversity, to encourage positive behavioural changes among citizens, and to provide coastal communities with a better understanding for more effective and sustainable natural resource management and use

We will continue to increase awareness and foster a greater appreciation of the values of, and threats to Guyana's marine and coastal biodiversity. We will encourage positive behavioral changes among citizens and coastal communities for more effective and sustainable natural resource management and use. We will do so through the development and implementation of an awareness campaign targeted at coastal communities, youth, the different sectors and the general public.

OBJECTIVES	KEY ACTIVITIES	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S)
2.1: Increase knowledge and awareness of Guyana's coastal and marine biodiversity among citizens, in particular among the youth	2.1.1 Develop and implement public awareness campaigns, and use appropriate mediums (e.g., social media, the Ministry of Education learning channels and billboards) to increase citizen's awareness of the values of marine and coastal biodiversity, threats and other key messages such as no-littering	Implement one major public awareness campaign by 2024, and two by 2027. Partner with and support 8 environmental clubs in coastal schools and sponsor 4 peer to peer exchange learning
	2.1.2 Work with coastal schools and environmental clubs to teach children and youth about ocean biodiversity, climate change and other key messages	
	2.1.3 Facilitate exchange programs for peer-to-peer learning in youth	
2.2: Promote the values and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources and increase understanding of their threats across coastal communities	2.2.1 Engage with and increase awareness in coastal communities about the status of, and threats to ocean biodiversity and promote the sustainable use of resources	By 2025, 70% of coastal communities are aware of the importance in conserving marine and coastal resource, increasing to 90% in 2027
2.3: Advocate for the inclusion of marine biodiversity priorities in cross-sectoral plans and policies	2.3.1 Lobby for the protection and conservation of key biodiversity areas and the establishment of marine protected areas, such as the Barima-Mora passage	By 2027, 1 marine and/or coastal protected or conservation area is established
	2.3.1 Increase awareness across the different sectors about the critical importance of a healthy ocean to support blue economic growth	By 2027, at least 2 other sectoral policies consider and include marine biodiversity

Strategic Theme 3: Community Development

Strategic Goal: Empower coastal communities for increased resilience to climate change and other hazards, and to benefit from the sustainable use and governance of coastal and marine resources

We will work to empower coastal communities for increased resilience to climate change and other hazards and to access benefits from the sustainable use and governance of marine and coastal resources.

Technical and institutional capacity will be built in local communities to participate in sustainable livelihoods and the sustainable governance and management of coastal resources.

OBJECTIVES	KEY ACTIVITIES	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S)
3.1: Support and build capacity for sustainable and climate resilient livelihoods across coastal communities	3.1.1 Build capacity and facilitate the development of relevant community-based groups in coastal communities for engaging in research and eco-tourism livelihoods (e.g., community guides, research center management; etc.)	By 2024, support 7 community-based groups, 12 by 2027
	3.1.2 Establish community research assistant groups that are fully equipped and their capacity built for employment as assistants to visiting researchers in field data collection	By 2024, establish, build capacity and equip, 1 core community research assistant group, 2 by 2027
	3.1.3 Identify, build capacity and support other sustainable and climate resilient livelihood opportunities (e.g., nature-based solutions and knowledge sharing)	Support 2 climate resilient and sustainable livelihood projects that incorporates traditional knowledge by 2024, 4 by 2027
	3.1.4 Understand and incorporate traditional knowledge into climate resilient livelihoods	
3.2: Build capacity in communities for the effective management and governance of coastal and marine resources	3.2.1 Provide technical support for the implementation of best practices for the sustainable use of natural resources in coastal communities	Formal partnerships with 7 communities established by 2024; 10 by 2027
	3.2.2 Establish and build capacity for the establishment of representative natural resource management committees in coastal communities that includes, women, youth and other marginalized groups.	By 2024, 1 coastal representative management committee established, 2 by 2027
	3.2.3 Support the development of community natural resource management plans	By 2024, 1 community natural resource management plan developed
	3.2.4 Build capacity in coastal communities for grant applications	By 2024, 1 community benefiting from a third-party grant, 3 communities by 2027

Strategic Theme 4: Strengthen GMCS organizational capacity

Strategic Goal: Strengthen partnerships and internal institutional structures for effective implementation of GMCS' activities so that the NGO is recognized as Guyana's premiere marine conservation partner

To build on our reputation as Guyana's premiere marine conservation partner and to effectively implement this plan, we will strengthen partnerships and our internal institutional structures. We will do this by developing new partnerships and strengthening existing ones, capitalizing on sustainable financing opportunities and building our volunteer base with international and national experts.

OBJECTIVES	KEY ACTIVITIES	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S)
4.1: Strengthen existing partnerships and seek out new opportunities to work together to support national processes e.g., marine spatial planning, MPA establishment, and oil and gas impact validation	4.1.1 Review and update existing partnerships where required	By 2024, 4 MoUs signed with government and non-governmental agencies; 8 by 2027
	4.1.2 Identify potential partners and synergies with other government and non-government agencies and develop formal partnerships (e.g., UG, PAC, CI, NAREI, Hydromet) to enhance the delivery of coastal and marine management and conservation outcomes	
4.2: Increase sustainable financing opportunities for the GMCS	4.2.1 Build capacity in GMCS board and volunteers for the identification and application of 3 rd party grants	50% of GMCS staff and volunteers trained in grant writing by 2024, 100% by 2027
	4.2.2 Lobby government to officially recognize and provide government subventions for GMCS activities.	GMCS receive government subvention by 2024
	4.2.3 Identify other fundraising opportunities to support GMCS activities (e.g. diaspora, fundraising events etc.)	
4.3: Expand GMCS' national and international volunteer expert engagement and involvement in supporting the implementation of GMCS' activities	4.3.1 Identify opportunities at a national level for enhanced technical and volunteer support	By 2024, GMCS has 6 active national volunteers; 12 by 2027
	4.3.2 Identify opportunities internationally for enhanced technical and volunteer support	By 2024, GMCS has 4 active international volunteers; 8 by 2027



5. HOW WILL WE DO IT?

5.1 Governance and Activity Implementation

We are governed by a Board of Directors consisting of a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, as well as representatives from communities and the private and public sectors. The Board is the decision-making body and provides governance and fiduciary oversight, as well as approving grants. Governance support is comprised of a Project Oversight Steering Committee which includes representatives from the GMCS board, supporting partners and relevant agencies with mandates for specific projects. A project executing unit which includes members with the requisite technical expertise and experience, holds quarterly meetings to review progress, monitor and mitigate potential risks, and ensures maximum use of resources in achieving project objectives. An operations sub-committee meets monthly and provides quarterly progress reports on project implementation.

We also aim to attract a larger pool of national and international expertise and intend to seek out funding support to establish a small team of permanent staff.

5.2 Financing

In the past, all funding has been derived from 3rd party grants and we will continue to seek donor funding on a project basis to implement activities. To achieve greater financial sustainability, we will also lobby government for a small subvention, as well as other NGOs for long term support for core activities and staffing.

5.3 Monitoring and evaluation

Progress towards key performance indicators (KPI's) (section 4) will provide the framework for which this strategy will be evaluated and will be assessed regularly by the Board. In addition, we will carry out a mid-term (and adapt strategies as required) and terminal review of our strategy progress together with wider stakeholders.